

Helps and Hints

Family Child Care Newsletter

Go West!

What has clowns, cacti, horses, bulls, beans, boots, and cowboy hats all rolled into one? A Western theme! We have provided a wide variety of experiences for the children in this theme. The children can learn about their pioneer heritage, about cowboys, Mexico, rodeos, snakes, Texas, armadillos, cows, horses, and Western clothing just to name a few of the ideas presented. So dust off your cowboy hat, dig out your boots and bandannas and hit the trail for a day of fun!

Arkansas State University

Childhood Services

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Art-Creativity

Horsetail Painting. (Toddlers, Pre-K, School-Age) Fan out several pieces of rope to resemble horses' tails. Have the children paint on paper any picture desired.

Hobby Horses. (Toddlers with help, Pre-K, School-Age)

Supplies:

- 1" dowel rods or yard sticks
- old socks
- felt, fabric
- yarn
- buttons, markers, etc.
- Stuffing or newspaper

Let the children create their own stick horse. Use rubber bands to attach the heads to the rods, then cover the rubber bands with duct tape for safety.

Create a Horse. (Toddlers with help, Pre-K, School-Age) Gather the following supplies: Brown wrapping paper, brown paper bags or white roll paper, yarn, glue, paint, and scissors. Help children draw a large horse shape on paper. Let them decorate it with yarn tails and manes. Cut out horse and display in classroom.

Wagon Wheels. (Toddler, Pre-K, School-Age) Color wagon wheel pasta and let your children string them, glue them, whatever they like. Use them as wheels to create a covered wagon.

Rope Pictures. (Pre-K, School-Age) Make rope pictures with clothesline or raffia. Use tacky glue on cardboard to make it stick. It works better if you soak the rope in the glue until it is pliable, then the children can arrange it on their work surface more easily. Ravel the end of a rope to paint with. Make a rope into a lasso shape. Provide foam trays, pie pans or other containers of paint. Let the children dip the lasso into the paint and press onto paper to create different designs. Infant/Toddlers: Squirt fingerprint onto paint paper, give them the rope and let them experiment with it in the paint.

Art-Creativity

Covered Wagon (School-Age)

Materials:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ sheet of brown construction paper per child, labeled lengthwise (bed of the wagon)
- 1 sheet of white copy paper (per child) (for the top of the wagon)
- 2 black circles with spokes (per child) (for the wagon wheels)
- potatoes
- black paint

First, cut shapes of different brands out of the potato halves for the children to use for stamping. Also cut out cow and horse shapes. Children stamp brands onto the brown paper. Next glue two black circles to the bottom of the wagon at the front and back, for wheels. Fold the white paper in half over the brown paper without creasing the white paper. Staple to the brown paper.

Decorated Cowboy or Cowgirl Boots. (all ages) Have the children cut a boot out of black or brown construction paper, then decorate it with sequins and stars. Let the children use paint, markers, crayons, colored glue, and collage materials to decorate their boots. Provide a stencil of a boot for the children to color around. Make a book cover and provide cowboy boot shaped paper for children to draw cowboy pictures on. 3) Infant/Toddlers: let the children finger paint with brown paint and cut out boot shape after it is dry.

Horseshoe Ideas. (Toddler, Pre-K, School-Age) Cut out horseshoe shapes from sponges and have the children dip them in paint and print with them. Trace around horseshoes or horseshoe stencil shapes. Have children dot them with black dots as the nails. A horseshoe pattern is included in this material.

Ten Gallon Hat. (Toddler, pre-K, School-Age) Give the children construction paper and let them cut out a ten gallon hat. Let them decorate it as they choose.

Art-Creativity

Cowboy Clothing. (Toddler with help, Pre-K, School-Age)

Explain to the children that the outfits were determined by need

and not by looks:

Hat - to shield eyes from the sun and used to drink water from a creek or river and used as a pillow

Bandanna - to keep dust out of eyes. Also used to blindfold a horse so it doesn't get "spooked"

Boots - the high heels keep feet in the stirrups and the high sides keep dirt off of feet and help protect legs against snakebites

Spurs - used to urge a horse forward

Chaps - to protect legs

Rope - used to lasso stray cows

Hats: Use a large cardboard ice cream container, or make a hat out of paper mache.

Vests: Slit a paper bag up the front and cut out places for neck and arm holes. Help the children fringe the bottom and the armholes. Let the children decorate them.

Chaps: Have each child lay down on brown wrapping paper. Draw around them to form a pair of chaps, remembering chaps are slightly larger than the pant legs. Fold the top of the "waistband" and tuck into the top of the child's jeans or pants. If the child has no waste band you can use duct or clear tape to tape them to overalls, etc. Decorate with art materials.

Bandannas - Purchase white muslin and cut it out in triangle shapes. Let the children color or glue on sequins or other decorative pieces to create their own individual bandannas

Cactus. (Toddlers, Pre-K, School-Age) 1) First display a real cactus. Encourage the children to gently touch the pointed spines. Talk about the unique things about a cactus such as spines, green color in the brown dessert, etc. With the children, make a batch of green playdough using liquid watercolor paint for bright vibrant colors. Provide toothpicks to be used as cactus spines. 2) With a black marker draw a cactus with two arms of different lengths - one up and one down. Use clothespins to hold sponges with green paint and have the children sponge paint the cactus. Then let them sponge paint the bottom brown for the sand. Glue on pieces of toothpicks for the spikes. 3) Paint a tongue depressor green and stick it into a styrofoam cup packed with dirt. Add toothpicks for spikes. A cactus plant!

Art-Creativity

Log Cabins. (Pre-K, School-Age) Collect small milk cartons for each child. After they are washed and dried, let them cover the cartons with sticks, using glue.

Brands. (Pre-K, School-Age) 1) Show the children brands and explain what they are and how they were used to identify the owners of the animals. Invite the children to use alphabet stamps or other art materials to create a brand to identify themselves or your child care site. 2) Have the children glue yarn or twine in the shape of their initials on small blocks. This is their own personal brand!

Rattlesnakes. (Pre-K with help, School-Age)

Supplies:

Paper plates

Scissors

Small scrap pieces of white, black, and red construction paper for features

Let the children color or paint the paper plates. Provide them with brown, black, copper (rattlesnake colors). Show them how the snake has geometric patterns. Supply stencils they can draw around if they wish of geometric shapes. When they are finished, spiral cut the paper plate to create a rattlesnake. Glue diamond shaped fangs, oval eyes, and red tongue in mouth. Be sure to include a book with pictures and information about snakes in your library, science and/or discovery area. If possible, acquire a snake skin to show the children. Contact your local forestry service and inquire if they have someone who could come out and give a lesson on snakes.

Rodeo Clown. (Pre-K, School-Age)

Supplies:

Dry erase markers

Laminated oval for clown face, small hand mirror, or laminated photo of each child

Let children design their own clown faces over and over again by wiping off the faces they have created when they are finished.

Rodeo Clown Cut-Out. (Toddler, Pre-K, School-Age) Cut out smiles, eyebrows, eyes, wig, and noses from construction paper. Make available to the children to create their own clown face by gluing it onto paper with an oval drawn on it.

Saddle Bags. (all ages) You will need 1 small brown paper lunch bag per child. Have the children decorate their "saddle bags" (lunch sacks). Then prepare Trail Mix for a snack.

Art-Creativity

Rodeo Clown Make-Up. (Toddler with help, Pre-K, School-Age) Provide clown make-up and let the children paint their own clown faces. Be sure to let them work where they can see what they are doing in a mirror. If toddlers want their face made up, you will probably want to do it or help them. After the children are made up, ask them how the make up feels. Talk about the clowns doing this day after day, etc. Be sure and take pictures for the parents and for your class photo album.

Rodeo Clown Make-Up Recipe

Ingredients:

1/3 cup cornstarch

2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons water

2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons cold cream

food coloring

In a small bowl, mix cornstarch, water and cold cream. Divide mixture into four containers and add food coloring as desired.

Hint: Mix the make-up in the lids of plastic-foam food containers for easy clean up.

No Allergy Face Paint

1 cup vegetable shortening

1 cup cornstarch

food coloring

Mix shortening and cornstarch until smooth. Divide mixture into three parts and add a different color of food coloring to each. Hint: Add more food coloring if mixture is too thick, or more shortening if it is too thin.

Long Horns. (Pre-K, School-Age)

Supplies: Brown paper (grocery bags or mailing wrap)

Paper bowls (paint them brown)

Twist brown paper to form long horns and attach to bowl with stapler. Place on child's head as a long horn hat!

Cactus Playdough. (Toddler, Pre-K, School-Age) Make green playdough. Use liquid watercolor paints to create bright, vibrant colors. Tint the playdough. Supply the children with play dough and toothpicks and invite them to make their own spiky cacti plants.

Crafts

Pie Plate Armadillo. (Pre-K, School-Age) (Do this in steps over several days depending upon the age of the children you are

working with.)

Supplies:

20 small paper plates per project

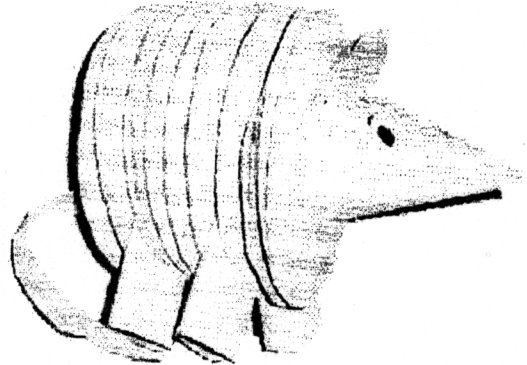
glue

two toilet paper tubes or 1 paper towel tube per project

lentil beans

markers

Glue 18 small paper plates top sides together to form nine disks of the armadillo. Glue the nine disks together for the body. Fold one more plate into a cone for the armadillo's perky snout, then spiral cut another for his tail. Add small paper ears. Flatten paper rolls and add for legs. Add dried lentil beans to the top of the head to look like the leathery skin. Color in his eyes.



Milk Carton Armadillo. (Toddler with help, Pre-K, School-Age) For this project, you'll need 1 pint milk or cream carton per child, some brown paper, and markers. Cover the sides and top with brown paper (construction, grocery bag or postal wrapping paper). Cut holes in the sides to make feet. Use the top of the carton for the armadillo's face. Add a rolled up paper tail and a paper nose and ears. Draw bands and pebbly texture with a marker.

These armadillos can be added to the block center or the sand box to enrich the play.

Beef Jerky. Cover 1 to 2 pounds of flank steak (sliced into 1/4 inch strips) with a marinade sauce (1/4 cup soy sauce, 1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce, pepper, salt, onion salt, garlic powder to taste) and refrigerate for 6 to 8 hours. Stir occasionally. Drain and place strips on a rack over a shallow pan (or use a broiler pan). Bake at 150 degrees for 8 to 10 hours until dried. Cool & eat or store in a tightly covered container. If the jerky is to be eaten right away, 8 hours of drying time should be sufficient and will make chewing easier for young children.

Sing, Song, Sway

I'm a Little Cowboy/Cowgirl

(To the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")

I'm a little cowboy/cowgirl. Here's my hat.
Here are my spurs and here are my chaps.
When I get up, I work all day,
Get on my horse and ride away (*galloping motion*).
(The rest of the lines have motions too, but they are self-explanatory.)

I'm a cowboy big and strong.
I ride horses all day long.
I carry a lasso and sing a song.
I'm a cowboy big and strong.
ai-yi-yi-yi-yippee-i-ay (3 times)
I'm a cowboy big and strong!

Put your foot in the saddle, your hand upon
the horn.

The round up is on, the round up is on.
Put your foot in the saddle, your hand upon
the horn.

The round up is on today.

Rattlesnake castanets. Gather some dried split peas and a paper towel roll per each child. Let child decorate tube as the rattle of a rattlesnake. Use duct tape to close off one end of the tube, fill $\frac{1}{2}$ way with split peas. Use duct tape to close off the other end. Children can shake and "hear what a rattlesnake sounds like".

Cattle Roundup

The dust begins to fly
As the cattle run by.
It starts with one moo-
First one cow and then two.
The dust begins to fly
As the cattle run by.
Spurred on by cowboy tricks,
Our bunch is up to six.
The dust begins to fly
As the cattle run by.
These cattle just can't wait!
The group now totals eight.
The dust begins to fly
As the cattle run by.
Two more run past the men,
Wow! The herd is up to ten!

Sing, Song, Sway

Roll On, Little Doggies

(Sung to "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean")

Last night as I lay on the prairie,
And looked at the stars in the sky,
And I wondered if ever a cowboy
Could drift to that sweet by and by.

Roll on, roll on,
Roll on, little doggies, roll on, roll on.
Roll on, roll on,
Roll on, little doggies, roll on.

The road to that bright happy region
Is a dim narrow trail, so they say;
But the broad one that leads to perdition
Is posted and blazed all the way.

Roll on, roll on,
Roll on, little doggies, roll on, roll on.
Roll on, roll on,
Roll on, little doggies, roll on.

They say there will be a great roundup,
And cowboys like doggies will stand,
To be cut by the riders of Judgment,
Who are posted and know every brand.

Roll on, roll on,
Roll on, little doggies, roll on, roll on.
Roll on, roll on,
Roll on, little doggies, roll on.

I wonder if ever a cowboy
Stood ready for that Judgment Day,
And could say to the boss of the riders,
I'm ready -- come drive me away.

Roll on, roll on,
Roll on, little doggies, roll on, roll on.
Roll on, roll on,
Roll on, little doggies, roll on.

Cowboy Lullaby

Way out West

(Point straight ahead.)

Where the stars are bright,

(Hold hand above eyes like a sun visor.)

I sing a song

(Pretend to strum a guitar.)

By the campfire light.

(Hold hands outstretched as if warming them in front of a fire.)

I ride my horse

(Pretend to ride a horse.)

On the wide prairie,

(Stretch arms out wide.)

We gallop along -

("Gallop" hands on thighs.)

My pony and me.

(Pretend to pet a horse.)

I watch ten cows

(Hold up ten fingers.)

That snort and moo,

(Snort and moo!)

I sing them to sleep

(Pretend to strum a guitar.)

When the day is through.

(Close eyes and pretend to sleep.)

Sing, Song, Sway

Way Out West

(Sung to the tune of "Old MacDonald")

Way out West are (buffaloes). Yippie-yippie-oh!

Way out West are (buffaloes). Yippie-yippie-oh!

With a (stomp, stomp) here and a (stomp, stomp) there.

Here a (stomp), there a (stomp), everywhere a (stomp, stomp).

Way out West are (buffaloes). Yippie-yippie-oh!

Way out West are (prairie dogs). Yippie-yippie-oh!

Way out West are (prairie dogs). Yippie-yippie-oh!

With a (bark, bark) here and a (bark, bark) there.

Here a (bark), there a (bark), everywhere a (bark, bark).

Way out West are (prairie dogs). Yippie-yippie-oh!

Repeat the song, substituting the names and sounds of other Western critters:

rattlesnakes - hiss, hiss, hiss

jackrabbits - twitch, twitch, twitch

coyotes - howl, howl, howl

Here We Go

(Sung to the tune of "Go In And Out The Window")

We're in a covered wagon.

We're in a covered wagon.

We're in a covered wagon,
A-rollin' down the trail.

We're in a covered wagon.

We're in a covered wagon.

We're in a covered wagon,
A-bumpin' down the trail.

We're in a covered wagon.

We're in a covered wagon.

We're in a covered wagon,
A-rockin' down the trail.

I'm a Little Cowboy

(Sung to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")

I'm a little cowboy. Here is my hat.
(point to self, then to hat)

Here are my spurs
(point to your heels)

And here are my chaps.
(point to legs)

As soon as I get up,
(stretch, pretend to wake up)

I work all day.
(pretend to lasso a cow)

I get on my horse
(pretend to get on a horse)

And ride away.
(pretend to gallop on a horse)

Sing, Song, Sway

Texas

(Sung to the tune of "Bingo")

I know a state that's big and great
And Texas is its name-o

T-E-X-A-S

T-E-X-A-S

T-E-X-A-S

And Texas is its name-o.

(Continue with song leaving off letter just like in "Bingo")

Giddy-Up Horsy

(Sung to the tune of "Ride a Horsy")

(First pretend to mount your horse - hold reins and sing)

Giddy-up horsy, go to town.

Giddy-up horsy,

Oops! Fall down.

(fall down)

Say: "Hey, what happened? Let's all get up and dust off our jeans and try this again."

(try again with the same results)

Then say: "I know! Maybe he's hungry!

Let's feed him some hay."

(demonstrate how to hold hand flat and pretend to feed horse. You can also chew like a horse)

Now say: "There, that should do the trick."

(Mount your horse and sing song again this time ending with)

"Ha! Ha! Ha! I didn't fall down!"

You can add verses: I know! Maybe he's lonely. Let's pet him.

I know! Maybe he's thirsty. Let's give him

some water. (either pretend to take off cowboy hats and dip into stream and water horse, or lead horse to creek to drink)

Jump Jim Joe

(Sung to the tune of "Turkey in the Straw")

Jump, jump, jump, Jim Joe.

Face your partner and bow real low.

Jump, jump, Jim Joe.

Skip, skip, skip, Jim Joe.

Hold hands with your partner

And away we go.

Skip around the circle nice and slow.

Stop, stop, stop, Jim Joe.

Clap, clap, clap, Jim Joe.

Stretch up high and touch your toes.

Cross your arms and do-si-do.

Clap, clap, clap, Jim Joe.

Sing, Song, Sway

A Cowpoke

(Sung to the tune of "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain")

Oh, a cowpoke sings a riding song. Ya-hoo!
Oh, a cowpoke sings a riding song. Ya-hoo!
When a cowpoke goes a ridin',
When a cowpoke goes a ridin',
Oh, a cowpoke sings a riding song. Ya-hoo!

Additional verses:

Oh, a coyote sings a howling song. Ah-ooo!
Oh, a pony sings a bucking song. Neigh-ay!
Oh, a doggie sings a roaming song. Moo-ooo!
Oh, a rattler sings a sliding song. Hiss-sss!

Look Around the Desert

(Tune of "Did You Ever See a Lassie")

Oh, look around the desert,
The desert, the desert.
Oh, look around the desert,
Now what do you see?

Oh, I see some (sand),
Yes, I see some (sand).
Oh, look around the desert
Do you see it, too?

Additional verses:

You may change the word () to lizards,
horses, prairie dogs, owls, roadrunners,
cactus, snakes, or coyote.

Cowgirl Way

(tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

Round, round, round 'em up,
Hey little doggies, hey!
Round, round, round 'em up,
That's the cowgirl way!
Giddy-up, giddy-up, giddy-up let's go,
Hey little horsey, hey!
Giddy-up, giddy-up, giddy-up let's go,
That's the cowgirl way!

On the Trail

(sung to "Old MacDonald")

In the wild west are coyotes, yodel-eighie-oh
And on the trail, they sing their song,
yodel-ay-hee-oh
With a hooowl here and a hooowl there,
Here a hooowl, there a hooowl, everywhere
a hooowl!
In the wild west are coyotes, yodel-ay-hee-oh!
Repeat with:
owls...whoo
buffalo...stomp
rattlesnakes...hiss
prairie dog...bark

Stories, Rhymes, & Jingles

Little Miss Muffet

Little Miss Muffet
Sat in her saddle
Eating some cowboy stew.
Along came an armadillo
And sat down beside her.
Now wouldn't that frighten YOU?

I'm a Tex

I'm a Tex, I'm a Tex,
I'm a Texas Star.
I come from the west
Where the cowboys are.
I can ride 'em,
I can rope 'em,
I can show 'em how it's done.
Come on you cowboys
With your six-shootin' gun.
Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!
(pretend to shoot in air)
Click, click, click, click, click
(clicking sound with mouth with action of putting away the gun)

Five Little Cowboys

Five little cowboys get up to dress.
The first one buttons up his vest.
The second one wears tall boots with taps.
The third one laces up his chaps.
The fourth one ties a big bow tie.
The fifth one tips his hat. Good-bye!

Five Little Cowboys

Five little cowboys sitting on a gate.
The first one said, "Gee rodeos are great!"
The second one said, "There are buzzards in the air."
The third one said, "But we don't care."
The fourth one said, "Let's watch the horses run."
The fifth one said, "I'm ready for some fun."
Oooooooooo went the wind and off went their hats,
And the five little cowboys fell from where they sat!

Ten Little Cowboys

Ten little cowboys
(ten fingers)
Standing in a row,
When they see
the foremen
They bow just so.
(bend fingers down)
They ride to the left, and
They ride to the right. *(move hands left and right)*
And then they
shut their eyes
And sleep all night. *(place cheek on hands)*

Stories, Rhymes, & Jingles

I Ride My Horse

I ride my horse
(pretend to ride a horse)
On the wide prairie,
(stretch arms out wide)
We gallop along
("gallop" hands on thighs)
My pony and me.
(pretend to pet a horse)

I Watch Them Cows

I watch them cows
(hold up ten fingers)
That snort and moo,
(snort and moo!)
I sing them to sleep
(pretend to strum a guitar)
When the day is through.
(close eyes and pretend to sleep)

Deep in the Heart of Texas

Teach the children what "sage", "coyotes", "prairie"
and "doggies" are (doggies are motherless or wild
calves).

The stars at night are big and bright
Deep in the heart of Texas
The prairie sky is wide and high
Deep in the heart of Texas
The sage in bloom is like perfume
Deep in the heart of Texas
Reminds me of the one I love
Deep in the heart of Texas.
The coyotes wail, along the trail
Deep in the heart of Texas
The rabbits rush, around the brush
Deep in the heart of Texas
The cowboys cry "ki-yip-pee-yi"
Deep in the heart of Texas

The doggies bawl and bawl and bawl
Deep in the heart of Texas

I Had A Little Pony

I had a little pony
His name was Dapple Gray
I lent him to a lady
To ride a mile away.
She whipped him, she slashed him,
She rode him through the mire.
I would not lend my pony now,
For all the lady's hire.

The Prancing Pony

Your prancing, dancing pony—
Oh, please don't tie him here,
This cherry tree's in blossom -
Oh dear, dear, dear!
He'll prance and dance and whinny,
He'll neigh and stamp and call,
And down the soft, pink blossoms
Will fall, fall, fall!

Stories, Rhymes & Jingles

I'm a Texas Star

I'm a Tex, I'm a Tex, I'm a Texas star.
I eat my beans from an old tin jar.
I can ride 'em, I can rope 'em, I will show
you how it's done.
Come on to Texas where you will be
number one!

Cowboy Stew

Cowboy stew, cowboy stew,
If I don't get some, I don't know what I'll
do.
Take away my cowboy hat,
Take away my boots,
But please don't take away my cowboy
stew.

Arizona Star

I'm an Arizona, Arizona, Arizona star
And I come from the west where the
cowboys are.
I can ride 'em, I can rope 'em,
I can show 'em how it's done.
I'm a rootin-tootin cowboy in the Arizona
sun.

Little Cowpoke

I'm a little cowpoke dressed in blue.
These are the things I like to do.
Put on my hat, and put on my vest.
Buckle my belt, so I look my best.
Ride my pony, rope my steer.
Sleep in my bunk when night is near.

Diddle, Diddle, Dumplin'

Diddle, diddle, dumplin'
My son, John.
Went to bed
With his blue jeans on.
One boot off,
And one boot on.
Diddle, diddle, dumplin'
My son, John.

There Was an Old Woman

There was an old woman
Who lived in a boot.
She had so many cowpokes
She didn't know what to do.
She gave
them some
cornbread
Without any
chili.
And sent
them to bed
Because they
were silly!

Stories, Rhymes & Jingles

Cattle Roundup

The dust begins to fly
As the cattle run by.
It starts with one moo-
First one cow and then two.
The dust begins to fly
As the cattle run by.
Spurred on by cowboy tricks,
Our bunch is up to six.
The dust begins to fly
As the cattle run by.
These cattle just can't wait!
The group now totals eight.
The dust begins to fly
As the cattle run by.
Two more run past the men,
Wow! The herd is up to ten!

I'm a Texas Star

I'm a Texas Star.
I eat pinto beans
From a great big jar.
With some bacon
And some biscuits
And a little bit of salt
"Cookie" (the cook) burned my finger
but it's not my fault.
Ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch!
(shake fingers as if hurting)
Whoo, whoo, whoo, whoo, whoo!
(blow on fingers)
Click, click, click, click, click.
(same as above, but put in "pockets")

Multi-Cultural Experiences

Mexico

Cowboys originally came from Mexico. They were men who rode on horses and took care of herds of cattle. They were known as vaqueros which is the Spanish word for "cowboys". When the vaqueros moved their cattle north into America to graze, American people watched the vaqueros and began to copy them.

Show serape, sombrero, and picture of vaqueros. Compare how the vaqueros dress to the way cowboys dressed. Let the children take a "trip" to Mexico. Look on the globe or map and locate Mexico. When the vaqueros moved their cattle into America, what obstacles did they face (river), etc.?

Play Mexican music and dance. Make tortillas, tacos, burritos and other Mexican dishes.

Texas

Talk to the children about how Texas was part of Mexico. Find information on Texas and share with the children.

Science

Books about snakes, lizards, other desert animals

Sand tub with toy snakes, lizards, etc., in it

Figures or pictures of horse/foal, cow/calf, chicken/chick, sow/piglet for children to match.

Snake skin, if possible.

Could also use rocks in discovery/science area.

Horseshoe magnet with assorted items for the children to discover and experiment with it.

Language Arts

Flannel Board Story

Supply these pieces:

horseshoe nail, horseshoe, horse, rider, sword, crown figures

For Want of a Nail (Nursery Rhyme)

For want of a nail the shoe was lost

For want of the shoe the horse was lost

For want of the horse the rider was lost

For want of the rider the battle was lost

For want of the battle the kingdom was lost

And all for the want of a nail.

Extension: Use real horseshoe and horseshoe nail. Show the children and talk about horseshoes and what their purpose is. Discuss the rhyme. Why does it say the kingdom was lost because of the nail? This can lead into why it is important for us to do the little things in our lives.

- There is not much difference between the West and other parts of the United States today. However, a long time ago things were very different.

• The pioneers thought May was the perfect time to set out because the spring rains had ended, the grass was plentiful, and there was just enough time to get over the mountains before the heavy snowfalls.

- A cowboy hat was essential. It kept rain, snow, and sun off the cowboy's face and was also useful for fanning fires and signaling to others.
- A cowboy would usually wear a bandanna tied around his neck so that it could be pulled over his nose during a ride on a dry, dusty trail.
- Thousands of people flocked to the West in search of gold and silver - but only a fraction of those people were lucky enough to find it. Even so, the deposits that were discovered were numerous enough and large enough that mining became a popular vocation in the West.
- Cowboys were essential to the Old West's cattle industry. A very important duty of the cowboy was to take part in the roundups every spring and fall. During a roundup, cowboys from several different ranches would work together and drive all the cattle in the open range to a central location. There they would read the brands on the cattle and sort them according to their markings. Any new calves would be branded with their mother's markings.
- The fastest way to send mail in the Old West was through the pony express. Approximately 80 riders rode about 400 fast horses in order to get mail cross-country in 10 days or less. The pony express ran day and night in all kinds of weather.
- Covered wagons were the best way to move families and belongings during this time of expansion. The wagons would travel in a line during the day.
- A wagon box, or bed, was made of wood. Sturdy wooden bows were bent across the top of the wagon and covered with a piece of white canvas for a cover.
- Boxes for supplies and equipment were often attached to the outsides of the wagons.
- The wagon's canvas could be pulled tight on the ends to keep out dust, wind, and rain.
- Covered wagons were also called prairie schooners because they looked like boats sailing through the grassy sea.
- Oxen pulled the wagons because they were stronger and cheaper than horses or mules. A yoke was attached to the front of the wagon to hold the oxen.
- Wagon trains were formed for better protection against Indian attacks and bandits.
- At night the settlers would form a circle with the wagons.
- Covered wagons had four wheels. The front two wheels were slightly smaller than the back two wheels.
- Buffalo roamed the prairies and sometimes crossed the trails in herds of hundreds.
- Some of the things that could be seen along the way were coyotes, jackrabbits, rattlesnakes, lizards, antelope and prairie dogs.
- Many pioneers kept journals and diaries to describe their experiences traveling West.
- Pioneers had to take enough food for the journey, tools to build their homes, household goods, and valuable personal items.
- Covered wagons could carry about 2,000 pounds. Anything heavier would break the wagons or be too heavy for oxen to pull.
- Sometimes families had to leave behind belongings when they crossed rivers or traveled over mountains.
- Because manufactured materials were scarce, children played with toys made from scraps of wood, fabric, and other natural materials.

Home Connection

Create a Western Home Connection activity pack.. You could sew two bandannas together to form a bag for the pack.

Ideas for the pack include:

- Cowboy Hat file folder game
- Rope, finger paint and art paper for child and parent to paint together at home
- A good cowboy book or tall tale

Parent participation:

Ask parents if any of them participate in the sport of rodeo or have family members who do. Ask them to come in and give a lariat/lasso demonstration and talk about rodeos.

Field Trips

Invite a local farrier (blacksmith) to bring his truck and show the children the tools he uses to shoe horses, etc.

Visit a local horse farm or rodeo arena.

Music

Supplies:

Washboard, spoons, guitar, fiddle (could make from cardboard and rubber bands), banjo, triangle, tambourine

Math Activities

Corral the Cattle

Supplies:

Small plastic cows or horses
Cards programmed with numbers
Blocks

Make cards programmed with numbers. Children each build a corral from blocks or other materials. They take turns drawing the programmed cards and put the number of cows or horses into their corral that corresponds to the number on the card they drew.

This game could also be played alone. Child draws cards and places the number of animals in the corral indicated on the card.

Round Up

Supplies:

Toy horses and/or cattle
Dice, playing cards, spinner or cards you have programmed with numbers
Small blocks - enough for each child in the game to build a corral

This would probably work best as a 2 - 3 player game. Children take turns rolling or spinning whatever you have provided as a number device and put that many animals into his/her corral. The first child to get five (or ten) animals into his/her corral wins that round.

Ten Gallon Hat

Cowboys referred to a particular hat style as a "ten gallon hat". Provide a talk picture of a ten-gallon hat. Ask the children how they think the hat got its name. Measure out ten gallons and let the children see how much water ten gallons would be. Why would cowboys be concerned with how much water their hats would hold? (They often watered their horses with their hats.)

For Want of a Nail

Get a real horseshoe and horseshoe nails. Let the children insert the nails into the shoe. Lift the horseshoe. Talk about the weight of the shoe and the weight of the nails. You could weigh the nails on the balance scale. How many nails are in the horseshoe?

Math Activities

How Many Hands Tall Are You?

Horses are measured in "hands". A "hand" is about 4". Either use the children's hands or cut out a card stock hand to measure each child's height. If you were a horse, how tall would you be? Let the children draw a horse and record their height on the paper to send home to parents.

A Knotty Problem

Provide rope for the children to try to tie a lasso or just practice tying and untying knots.

Provide raffia or other materials for the children to work on braiding a lariat. You could provide a board with nails or clips for them to attach three pieces of raffia to hold while they braid.

Oval

Cut out a small oval for a horse's head, two smaller ovals as the ears, larger oval for the body, four rectangles for the legs. Talk about the shapes. Let the children experiment to see if they can glue their shapes onto a piece of paper to create a horse. Provide yarn for mane and tail. Could also cut out several rectangle strips to use for a corral for their horse or a square and triangle to use as a barn.

Lasso Shapes

Make shapes with the lasso/and or rope for your toddler to identify.

Circle (lasso) Square (corral) Rectangle (barn) Oval (egg)

Bandanna Shapes

Hold up a bandanna and ask your toddler what shape it is (square). Talk about the square. Now pretend to be a magician. Say "I'm going to change the shape of the bandanna, watch 'abracadabra silly chili beans' (or your own favorite magic words). Fold into a rectangle. Repeat for triangle. Fold corners into form diamond. You can roll the bandanna to form a circle.

File Folder Games

Cowboy Hat Match Up

Baby Animal Match Up

Clown Faces Match

Funny Farm

Cowboy Boots, Bandanna, Hat Match Up

Block Center

Ranch or Farm Animals

Put cows, pigs, horses, chickens, dogs and cats in the block center. Encourage children to build a ranch and/or corral for them with the blocks. Provide figures to act as the cowboys, cowgirls, rancher and rancher's wife. Also provide cowboys and Native American toys, and blue felt or fabric for a river. Try some Lincoln Logs to build a log cabin.

Soft Toys

Put stuffed cows, donkeys, horses in the centers.
Sleeping roll in dramatic play.

Motor Skills

Lace Ups. Print a cowboy hat, cow, horse, or horseshoe on card stock. Laminate and punch holes around the edges. Provide yarn, round shoestrings, or lacing for the children to lace around the western items.

Puzzles. Make puzzles of cowboy hats, bulls, horses, boots, stagecoach, covered wagon, etc. Print two copies of the picture. Cut one into a puzzle; use the other as a mat to help the children as they put the picture together. Choose puzzles from your puzzle collection that have farm animals, horses, cowboys, etc., as their theme.

Rope Braiding. Braid rope. Provide raffia or other material for the children to learn to braid a lariat.

Black Smith. Provide foam block cut into a horseshoe shape or with a horseshoe shape drawn on it. The children may use golf tees to play blacksmith and pound the nails (tees) into the foam horseshoe.

Black Smith 2. Use a real horseshoe and real horseshoe nails (available at local hardware stores). Use a styrofoam block at least 1.5" thick beneath horseshoe for the children to stick the point into and hammer down. Let the children put the nails into the horseshoe.

For Want of a Nail (Blacksmith Math-2 players)

Supplies:

- 2 Horseshoes (either real ones or card stock)

- 16 Horseshoe nails (or golf tees)

- 2 Styrofoam blocks of sufficient thickness ($1\frac{1}{2}$ ") to protect table top from nails or tees.

Program cards with pictures of horseshoes or horseshoe nails and the numbers 1 through 8 (pattern included in the material). Children draw a card and insert that many horseshoe nails into the horseshoe to "save the horse from losing a shoe". Use in coordination with "For Want of A Nail" (See nursery rhymes). First child to put all eight horseshoe nails into his/her horseshoe is the winner.

Motor Skills

Barrel Racing. Set up 3 chairs in a triangle in the center of the room and show the children how to run around them, gallop, etc.

You could also use barrels outside in the yard.

Rodeo Clown. Supplies: Clown make-up & Dramatic play clothing for costumes
Children can pretend to be a rodeo clown saving the bull or bronco riders, dancing around as the real rodeo clowns do, etc.

Tumbleweeds. Have the children lie down on the floor. When teacher blows they roll like tumbleweeds. When she stops blowing, they stop rolling. You could use a fan and turn it off and on instead of blowing.

Tuggin' Cattle. Talk about how it was sometimes hard to get the cattle to move to where the cowboy wanted the cows to go after he got them roped. Have a tug of war; one team is the "cattle", the other one is the cowboys. Switch parts after a few rounds.

Stampede. Tell the children about a stampede and how much work and danger there was when a stampede happened. Have children decide if they want to be part of the cattle or cowboys. Give cowboys stick ponies. Have the cattle pretend to be "grazing" or "sleeping" then make a loud noise (tell them it is thunder) and the cattle begin to run. The cowboys must "round up" the cattle and get them back. When a cowboy touches a "cow" the "cow" has to return to the herd. Have the children take turns being cattle or cowboys.

Horseshoes: It's a "Shoe-In"!

Before the invention of automobiles, many people used horses for transportation. But on rough and rocky terrain, can you imagine how the horses' hooves must have worn out? That's just where **Oscar Brown**, an African American, comes into the picture. He invented the horseshoe in 1892! Recognizing Oscar Brown's invention is an opportunity to flex those gross-motor skills! Obtain a plastic horseshoe set. After demonstrating how to play the game, set it up as a center for your youngsters. To add a math element to this center, teach your little ones to keep score. Use a child's game of horseshoes or use real horseshoes and make a horseshoe court for children to throw horseshoes. Be sure to supervise so no one is hit by a flying horseshoe. To find out the official rules for horseshoe pitching you can go to www.horseshoepitching.com.

Sensory Play

Sand Table. Desert Animals: Put out desert animals (lizards, snakes, rabbits, etc.) in the sand table or sand tub for the children to discover and to create homes for them.

Put plastic covered wagons (available with many cowboy/Indian sets) in the sand table. As the children try to roll them in the sand they will discover one of the problems the pioneers had.

Water Table. Place cattle and horses and cowboy figures in the water table. Talk about the difficulties of the cowboys driving cattle across rivers. Let the children pretend they are driving a cattle herd across a river. Wash campfire dishes in water tub. Explain the pioneers sometimes didn't have water, but scrubbed their dishes with sand.

Country Music Fun. Video tape children dancing to country music to view afterwards with the children and to show at the next Parent Meeting.

Rope Burns. Show children rope and let them feel the rope. You could make a rough/smooth center with stones, rope, sand paper, pail (milk pail), sticks (campfire), etc. While interacting with the children, point out these rough textures are why cowboys wear heavy gloves to work, bull ride, etc.

Horseshoes. Show the children horseshoes and let them feel them. Encourage them to clink them together and on other objects. Talk about the sound horses make when they walk on pavement in a parade. Use paper cups turned upside down and "clap, clap" them on a table or other surface. You might "clap" on different kinds of surfaces. Does it sound the same on grass outside as on pavement? What about wood (like a barn floor)? Which is loudest? Give each child two paper drinking cups. Turn them upside down and hit onto a surface such as a table or floor. They will make a "clap, clap" sound similar to the sound a horse makes. Show the children how to "walk" their horse slowly, then "trot" and finally "gallop". Does the sound change? Repeat as often as they like. Infant/toddlers will enjoy the above activity. You can also play a gross motor game with the infant/toddler. Have the little one lay on his/her back. Pick up his/her feet and move them in a circle slowly "This is how the farm horse goes plod, plod, plod". Move more quickly. "This is how the cart pony goes clip, clap, clip, clap". Speed up a little more, "This is how the trotter goes trot, trot, trot". And finally moving very quickly, "This is how the race horse goes gallop, gallop, gallop". Repeat as long as the little one is enjoying the interaction between you and the movement. A variation would be to put the little one's feet on top of your feet and hold the little one's hands or under his arm (if he/she is old enough). As you say the various types of horses, move your feet with the infant/toddler's feet on top of

Pretend Play

Campfire in the House Corner. For this, you'll need a canteen and a "sleeping roll" per child. Make a block circle with red and orange tissue paper inside. Add a cooling rack on top. Have pans, plastic hot dogs, hamburgers, cooking utensils, etc. The kids have fun cooking like they did in the "olden days".

Ride'em, Cowboy! Gather the following items: hay bales, horse blanket, saddle, cowboy hats, boots, lariat, and ponchos. Cover bales with horse blanket and saddle and let the kids ride in the saddle. Dress up in "cowboy" clothes (cowboy hat, chaps, vest, sheriff's badge, bandannas, and boots) or "cowgirl" clothes (gingham dresses, shawls, bonnets, button shoes, parasol)

Clown (Rodeo)

Supplies:

- clown make-up (see recipe)

- large shoes (can paint tennis shoes or other shoes with spray paint to make them look funny; put in colored laces)

- clown wig (available in the Oriental Trading catalog or in stores at Halloween).

Parents may have wigs they would donate.

Clothes - dramatic play materials you already have will work fine - brightly colored shirts, bandannas, pants, etc.

Read a story about rodeo clowns. *Armadillo Rodeo* by Jan Brett shows wonderful pictures of rodeo clowns. *White Dynamite and the Curly Kid* by Bill Martin Jr. and John Armandault also have some excellent illustrations of rodeo clowns. Explain to the children the job is very dangerous and very important to protecting the riders.

Check to see if your community has an active rodeo group. There may be rodeo clowns who would come either in or out of costume to tell the children what it is like to be a rodeo clown.

Prospector. For this game, gather the following supplies: Rocks, Gold paint, Shovel, "gold pans" (pie tins), Sand, Dish tub or water table, Hat, Coat, Fake fur for beard

Spray rocks with gold paint. When dry, place them in water table that is filled with sand and water. Place toy shovels and pie pans in there for the children to pretend they are prospecting for gold. You might want to read a story about prospecting before you show them the gold so they understand the process.

Outdoor Play

Rattlesnake Game. Supplies: rattlesnake castanets (see crafts section) and a bandanna as a blindfold. Have the children stand in a circle. Blindfold one child as "It". "It" stands in the middle of the circle. Spin him around. The object is for him to touch another child by touching him/her with his rattlesnake castanets. "It" begins walking toward other children. When they feel he is getting too close, they rattle their castanets to "warn" him. The child who is closest to the "rattler" has to stand still, but other players can rattle their castanets to mislead "It". Whoever "It" touches becomes the next "It".

Square Dancing

Supplies: Country music

Square Dance:

Circle to the left

Now circle to the right

Skip into the circle

Pick out of the circle

Swing your partner

Promenade

Girls curtsy/boys bow

Memory Game. Make a memory game from cowboy theme pictures (boots, hat, spurs, and whip) or use "brands" after discussing what they are and how the cowboys used them.

Stagecoach. Show the children a talk picture of a stagecoach. Let the children tell what they think the stagecoach was used for. What would it be like to ride in a stagecoach? Pretend to take a ride in a stagecoach. Let the children assume various parts - i.e. driver, passengers, horses (provide canteens, whip, reins). You could use a large cardboard box as the box of the stagecoach). Pack a trunk to take with you. What would you put in your trunk or valise for a trip in the olden days? Tell about how people traveled by stagecoach. Look at the various parts of the stagecoach. When the children have finished looking at it, give each child the name of a part of the stagecoach. You may want to make up cards with pictures and the word for the children to hold to help them remember which part is theirs. Tell a story about a stagecoach trip. As you tell the story, name various parts of the equipment. As each child's part is mentioned he/she is to jump up, turn around and sit back down. Each time you say the word "stagecoach" everyone jumps up turns around and sits back down. This game was popular in the 1800's. Some parts you can use are door, whip, reins, harness, trunk, window, seat, horses, etc.

Book List

TITLE	AUTHOR
The Cowboy's Christmas	Joan Walsh Anglund
White Dynamite and Curly Kidd	Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault
Armadillo Rodeo	Jan Brett
The Happy Horse	Claude Fregosi
Barn Dance	Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault
Too Cool Cows	Toby Speed
What is That?	Denham Lampson
The Cow Who Wouldn't	
Come Down	Paul Brett Johnson
Paul Bunyan	Steven Kellogg
Pecos Bill	Steven Kellogg
Animal Daddies and My Daddy	Golden Books
Mrs. Mooley	Jack Kent
Old McDonald Had a Farm	Carl Hauge
The Grumpy Morning	Darcie Lebrosse
Peek-A-Moo	Marie Tores Cinamariti
Time For Bed	Mem Fox
Touch and Feel Farm	DK
From Head to Toe	Eric Carle
I Wish I Were a Cowboy	Bullock
Sam's Wild West Show	Nancy Antle
Someday Rider	Ann Herbert Scott
If You Traveled West in a Covered Wagon	Ellen Levine